

ADIEU TO THE ICONIC HAVEN HOUSE

It did not fall to fire or the elements. It survived post WWII modernism and urban renewal. As businesses came and went, residents moved in and out of Wyandotte, young men and women went off to fight in various wars, and the overall landscape of Biddle Avenue changed, it stood strong and majestic.



For more than 150 years, the home at the northeast corner of Biddle and Vinewood made an indelible mark on the city of Wyandotte – so much so that its absence at the hands of demolition crews on December 28, 2020 has already proven to be bittersweet to those who pass by or remember all it once was.

Built just after the Civil War, the property was originally owned by Elizabeth Haven, whose husband, James, was a carpenter and pattern maker. After apprenticing for some time in New York, their youngest son, James De Alton began his own printing service out of the home in 1879. At that time, he was just fourteen-years-old and was unaware of just how successful he would grow to be.

By June of 1886, Haven became the owner of the Wyandotte Herald newspaper and would oversee its operations from the office on the south side of Oak Street, between Biddle and Van Alstyne (currently a small city parking lot).

From 1886 until his death in 1943, Haven, who became affectionately known as “Dolly” by Wyandotte residents, wore many hats. Not only was the proprietor of the Wyandotte Herald, but he was also editor and reporter. He married Wyandotte resident, Della Andrews in 1900 and they welcomed their only child, son James De Alton Haven, Jr. in 1906. J.D., Sr. remained in the family home after the deaths of both of his parents, and resided there until his own death.



Although the Wyandotte Herald would become the News Herald shortly thereafter, J.D. Haven, Jr., would go on to follow in the footsteps of his father, continuing on as a printer until his retirement in 1976. Receiving his own nickname of “Dee,” he would pass away in 1988.



By 1950, the Haven House at 2557 Biddle Avenue had changed hands and become Peggy’s Florist/Peggy’s Flower Shop/Flowers by Peggy and eventually Flower House Florist.

Stories abound from residents of the last seventy years, such as “I bought my corsage from there,” “I would stop there to get mom flowers,” “I loved that place because they had fresh flowers and the building was so unique,” or “they were always there to help with all our needs.” It was a popular place, and as we celebrate its legacy in the romantic month of February, the florist likely made many Valentine’s Day events much sweeter.

Like the print and floral shops that operated within its walls, the old Haven House is now gone. A fond memory, we can still enjoy its former glory in photographs and stories – a Wyandotte legend for many generations. So long, old friend.